

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5701

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 32810

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN FR

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF FRENCH OFFICIAL ON U.S./EUROPEAN RELATIONS

1. BERNARD, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HAS GIVEN ECON/COMM MIN HIS VIEWS ON US/EUROPEAN RELATIONS, THE ENERGY PROBLEM AND THE TNC PROBLEM. IS VIEWS ON THE LATTER TWO PROBLEMS WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.

2. BERNARD SAID HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN US/FRENCH RELATIONS AFTER A PERIOD OF TENSION. HE THOUGHT THEJOBERT/KSSINGER BREAKFAST HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY VALUABLE. THIS BEING SAID HE FELT COMPELLED TO SAY THAT THE FRENCH HAD BEEN LESS SURPRISED AND PUT OUT BY U.S. BEHAVIOR
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DURING THE MID EAST WAR THAN SOME OF OUR LESS INDEPENDENT

MINDED FRIENDS IN EUROPE. FRANCE HAS ALWAYS EXPECTED THAT THE U.S. LIKE ANY GREAT POWER WOULD ACT ALONE WHEN IT FELT ITS VITAL INTERESTS WERE AT STAKE.

3. ECON/COMM MIN REMARKED THAT THERE WERE TWO POINTS ON WHICH THE GOF HAD SEEMED MORE CONCERNED THAN ITS EUROPEAN PARTNERS--FIRST, THE CONCEPT OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE EC AND SECOND WHAT JOBERT HAD CALLED THE U.S./SOVIET CONDOMINIUM. ON THE FIRST POINT BERNARD SAID THE EC WAS EMBARKED UPON A MAJOR ENTERPRISE--THE CREATION OF ITS POLITICAL UNITY. THIS UNITY WAS NOT BEING CREATED EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE UMS. BUT AS SOMETHING PURELY EUROPEAN. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR EUROPE TO CREATE A PURELY EUROPEAN POLITICAL ENTITY IF IT WAS CLOSELY LINKED TO THE U.S. BY INSTITUTIONS, FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCEDURES AND THE LIKE, PARTICULARLY WITH A NATION AS POWERFUL AS THE U.S. WHAT WOULD EMERGE FROM SUCH A RELATIONSHIP WOULD NOT BE A EUROPEAN BUT AN ATLANTIC ENTITY. THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT ONCE THE NINE HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ON A POSITION, THIS POSITION COULD NOT BE CHANGED IN NEGOTIATION WITH THE U.S. BERNARD REPEATED THAT THE EC WAS MOVING TOWARD POLITICAL UNITY AND THAT THIS WAS GOOD FOR THE U.S. EVEN IF AT TIMES WE FOUND THE PROCESS IRRITATING.

4. AS FOR DETENTE BERNARD SAW TWO PROBLEMS. FIRST, WHEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR MOVED CLOSER TO EACH OTHER, THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER TENDED TO BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER RELATIONSHIPS. THIS MEANT THAT THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE SMALLER POWERS WITH THE TWO SUPER POWERS SUFFERED AND THEY TENDED TO BE LEFT OUT OF IMPORTANT MATTERS. THE SECOND POINT WAS THAT THE U.S. AND THE USSR WERE QUITE DIFFERENT POWERS. THE U.S. WAS ENGAGED IN A PROCESS OF TRYING TO REDUCE ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD WHEREAS THE SOVIET UNION WAS TRYING TO EXPAND ITS. IN THE VIEW OF THE GOF, A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO SUCH POWERS WAS NOT A GOOD THING.

5. ECON/COMM MIN REMARKED THAT A RECENT ARTICLE IN A FRENCH ECONOMIC MAGAZINE HAD SAID THAT GROWING GOF CONCERN ABOUT LONG RANGE SOVIET INTENTIONS WAS LEADING TO A CHANGE IN FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR WAS COOLING AND FRANCE WAS MOVING CLOSER TO THE U.S. AND TO ATLANTICISM.
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BERNARD REPLIED THAT THIS WAS BOTH TRUE AND NOT TRUE. FRANCO/SOVIET RELATIONS WERE STILL GOOD ALTHOUGH NOT AS GOOD AS THEY HAD BEEN SAY A YEAR AGO. ON THE OTHER HAND THE GOF WAS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT SOVIET PLANS MIGHT BE, NOT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, BUT SAY TEN YEARS FROM NOW. THE USSR WAS AN EXPANSIONIST UNDEMOCRATIC POWER, THE U.S. WAS NEITHER. FRANCE NATURALLY PREFERRED BEING UNDER THE U.S. UMBRELLA THAN THE SOVIET UMBRELLA. THE U.S. DID NOT CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO

FRANCE NOR DID CHINA. THE ONLY CONCEIVABLE THREAT OVER THE
NEXT TEN YEARS OR SO WAS THE USSR.

6. COMMENT: FRENCH POLICY AS DESCRIBED BY BERNARD SEEMS
SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY--ON THE ONE HAND MODERATE DISENCHANTMENT
WITH THE USSR, WITH A CONSEQUENT "TILT" TOWARD THE U.S.;
ON THE OTHER HAND CONTINUED INSISTENCE THAT A POLITICALLY
UNITED EUROPE MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM THE U.S. WHAT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN IS WHETHER CONCERN ABOUT LONG RANGE SOVIET
INTENTIONS WILL LEAD TO GREATER FRENCH FLEXIBILITY IN THE
VARIOUS AREAS WHERE U.S. AND FRENCH POLICY CONFLICT.
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